

A Concert Performance of

Falstaff

by

MICHAEL WILLIAM BALFE



Thursday 25th September 2008
National Concert Hall



The Department of
Arts, Sport and Tourism

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION



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Front Cover: Original photograph of Luigi Lablache in the role of *Falstaff*.

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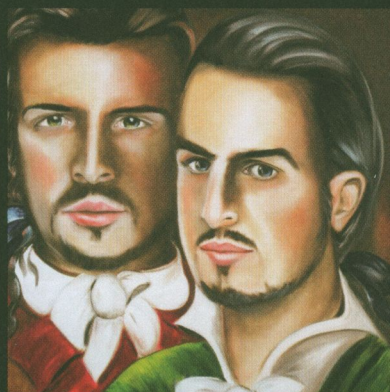
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RTÉ

THE IRISH TIMES



Fáilte Ireland
National Tourism Development Authority

Opera Ireland and RTÉ present
a concert performance of

Falstaff

by

MICHAEL WILLIAM BALFE

Sung in the original Italian with English Surtitles

RTÉ Concert Orchestra

Marco Zambelli *Conductor*

The National Chamber Choir
of Ireland

FALSTAFF	Marcel Vanaud
MRS. FORD	Majella Cullagh
FORD	Sam McElroy
FENTON	Barry Banks
ANNETTA	Tara Erraught
MR. PAGE	Nyle Wolfe
MRS. PAGE	Victoria Massey
GIORGIO	Brendan Collins
MRS. QUICKLY	Edel O'Brien

RTÉ lyric fm



CHRISTMAS RELEASE
BALFE'S *FALSTAFF*
on Double CD only €19.99

Tonight's first full performance of Falstaff since 1838 will be released on CD
by RTÉ lyric fm at the end of October.

Available in record shops nationwide or rte.ie/shop

96-99fm

www.rte.ie/lyricfm

MESSAGE FROM MINISTER MARTIN CULLEN

Michael William Balfe's

Falstaff

National Concert Hall
25th September 2008



The bicentenary year of the Dublin composer Michael William Balfe is a very important one for all those interested in the history of opera in this country. Celebrating this occasion in an appropriate way was an important part of the Department of Art, Sport and Tourism's Plan for 2008, published earlier this year. I am very pleased that we have been in a position to support this major project which I believe is investing significantly in the future international reputation of Balfe.

Tonight's performance and recording project has creatively brought back to life a hitherto 'lost' composition by an important Irish composer. Up until now, Balfe's reputation has been based on a relatively small portion of his enormous output of works. At the very least, this reconstruction of his opera *Falstaff* will bring beautiful music by a great Irish composer to present and future generations.

I congratulate the producing partners of RTÉ and Opera Ireland on their creative and innovative approach to this ambitious project and I would also like to also thank all those who have assisted in this uniquely collaborative venture.

With best wishes for a most enjoyable evening,

Minister Martin Cullen

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism

Michael W. Balfe

A Unique Victorian Composer

BASIL WALSH

Foreword by **Richard Bonyng**

'a most worthwhile book that is an advance on anything yet written on the subject'

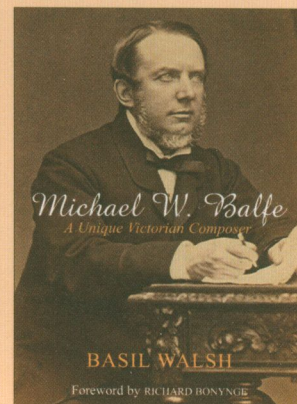
The British Music Society News

Michael William Balfe (1808–1870), rose to fame in London in 1835 immediately after the premiere of his first opera, *The Siege of Rochelle*. For the next thirty-five years this unique Dublin-born musician was destined to be the most important operatic composer in Victorian Britain.

He was to music in Victorian Britain what his renowned contemporary, Charles Dickens, was to literature. The popularity of their respected works reached far beyond London, Dublin and New York in the English speaking world. Balfe also personally achieved great success in places such as Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Bologna, Palermo, Trieste and St Petersburg in Russia. In all, he composed twenty-eight operatic works over his lifetime. However, when his French, Italian and German language versions are added, he can actually be credited with forty-three operas. For over fifty years his opera *The Bohemian Girl* swept around the globe with great success having been translated into many different languages.

This definitive biography took seven years of international research and is long overdue. It corrects many anecdotal errors of previous books. It documents Balfe the man, his work, his descendents, his legacy and influence. The biography unearths many new facts about this important Victorian composer, his music, his family, and his role as a music director at London's Italian Opera House, where he directed the local premieres of several Verdi operas. It lists all of his operas with premiere casts and the principal arias. It also identifies the current location of all known Balfe scores and music, including his early Italian compositions which have been deemed 'lost' by most scholars.

320 pages illus 2007
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- CHAPTER TEN The Final Years 1861–1874

Basil Walsh is an author and writer on nineteenth-century opera. He was born in Dublin and has lived most of his life in Florida. In 2001, he was invited by the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin to contribute to its forthcoming multi-volume, *Dictionary of Irish Biography*. His 370-page biography, *Catherine Hayes – The Hibernian Prima Donna*, was published by Irish Academic Press in September 2000.

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WELCOME TO MICHAEL WILLIAM BALFE'S

Falstaff

On behalf of Opera Ireland and RTÉ we would like to welcome you to tonight's historic performance of Michael William Balfe's *Falstaff*. This concert performance is being presented to mark the bicentenary of a remarkable and proud Dublin man who was, at one stage, the most popular opera composer in the English-speaking world.

It is extraordinary to think that, due to a series of historic accidents, all of us here tonight will be the first people to experience this work in full since its hugely successful premiere in London in 1838. Thanks to tonight's performance, broadcast and the forthcoming CD/download recording, this work can now live and breathe again. Undoubtedly it will find its rightful place in the opera world and win the affections of new audiences and future generations.

Opera Ireland, the RTÉ Concert Orchestra and RTÉ lyric fm have been working in partnership for many years in the performance and broadcast of Opera Ireland's annual season of opera productions. It has been a great pleasure to work together on this special project which we hope will add to the appreciation of Irish opera in general and respect for Michael William Balfe in particular.

This project has also been supported by other partners and individuals. We are particularly grateful to Minister Martin Cullen and the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism, to The Peter Moores Foundation and to Dublin City Council, all of whom have been important funders of the project and without whom it could not have taken place.

We would also like to extend our thanks to musicologist Valerie Langfield for her careful preparation of the new performing edition and to Balfe's biographer, Basil Walsh, both of whom have been of great assistance. Finally we would like to thank you, the audience, for coming to share in the occasion and for helping to make this a memorable and historic evening.

Niall Doyle
Opera Ireland

Séamus Crimmins
RTÉ Performing Groups

Aodán Ó Dubhghaill
RTÉ lyric fm

A STATUE OF
BALFE,
ERECTED IN
1874 STANDS IN
THE VESTIBULE
OF THE
THEATRE
ROYAL,
DRURY LANE
IN LONDON



CREATING THE NEW PERFORMING EDITION OF FALSTAFF BY BALFE

By Musicologist Valerie Langfield

It was in November 2005 that I was approached and asked if I'd be interested in making a modern edition of *Falstaff*. To bring an opera back to life, one that hasn't been heard in its entirety for 170 years, is a daunting prospect. To put it bluntly – will the opera be any good? The reviews of the time thought so but it is the way of these things that it takes a little time before one can decide for oneself. On the surface, making a new edition seems a straightforward, if a rather laborious task. Thanks to the generosity of Balfe's wife, Lina, the British Library, London, has the original full score (in Balfe's writing); it also holds the published vocal score but I could not track down any parts in any other archive. In my experience, even if parts were available, they are too likely to have errors; and besides, they would be unfriendly to modern musicians – the score calls for clarinets in C, which we don't use any more, and Balfe's horns are not valved horns but horns with crooks. Similarly the score calls for trumpets in C, A, D, and various other transpositions. So it was inevitable that I would need to make a completely new score, taken from the original – without changing any of the notes but adjusted for modern instruments. Once copies were obtained of both the full and vocal scores, the work really started. Long before it had even got to the point of ordering copies, however, I'd spent

several hours in the Library comparing the scores. It was soon clear that there were some significant differences, some of the more obvious ones being that the last aria is substantially different, though with similar melodies. The last page of the full score is missing and the Overture in the full score is longer than that in the vocal score. Basil Walsh, Balfe's biographer, had also given me copies of some published songs which weren't in the vocal score but which were nevertheless from *Falstaff*.

I realised that what I had was a vocal score of the 1838 version but a full score of the 1848 revision and that the extra songs were 1848 revisions. Balfe had removed or revised arias from the full score but, very occasionally, he had left in the original version too. This meant that I could, for the most part reconstruct the 1838 version and, where I could not, I made a new piano reduction from the full score.

Some of the arias had been transposed down for inclusion in the vocal score, to accommodate those lesser mortals whose voices did not permit them to reach the high notes – Fenton's aria in Act 2, 'Ah, la mia mente', for example, is a full three semitones higher in the full score than in the vocal score. Even the full score has an alternative introduction to allow it to be

THE BRITISH
LIBRARY,
LONDON HAS
THE ORIGINAL
FULL FALSTAFF
SCORE IN
BALFE'S
HANDWRITING

Alto Moderato *Pizzetto* *Donna Allegro*

Flauti *Flauti* *Flauti* *Flauti*

Oboi *Oboi* *Oboi* *Oboi*

Clarinetto *Clarinetto* *Clarinetto* *Clarinetto*

Trombe *Trombe* *Trombe* *Trombe*

Cori Eb *Cori Eb* *Cori Eb* *Cori Eb*

Cori C *Cori C* *Cori C* *Cori C*

Violotti *Violotti* *Violotti* *Violotti*

Trombone *Trombone* *Trombone* *Trombone*

Symphoni *Symphoni* *Symphoni* *Symphoni*

Violini *Violini* *Violini* *Violini*

Vale *Vale* *Vale* *Vale*

Posa *Posa* *Posa* *Posa*

Armetta *Armetta* *Armetta* *Armetta*

Marica *Marica* *Marica* *Marica*

Violli *Violli* *Violli* *Violli*

Organi *Organi* *Organi* *Organi*

Alto Moderato

Donna parlava ma

performed a tone lower, for Italo Gardoni, who was to have sung it in Paris.

The full score also includes recitatives which aren't in the vocal score. This is hardly surprising, since the recitatives were very much part of the production, rather than being music that was to be available for a buying public. They have been included in this new edition. They were exceptionally hard to read and set, partly because of the absence of barlines and partly because of Balfe's scrawl! One section of the libretto was clearly meant to be a recitative but there was no music, so I composed one in the style of Balfe. The final result was not only a new full score, but also a new vocal score, using the original pages wherever possible.

Balfe must have had some fine instrumental players available to him, to judge by some of the solo lines. The orchestra was a standard one for the time – double woodwind, with piccolo (called 'ottavino' in the score), four horns, two trumpets (and sometimes the fairly new 'cornets à pistons'), two trombones and a bass trombone, and either the soft-toned serpent or ophicleide taking the bass line of the brass section. These last are not easy to come by in modern times, so a mellow double bassoon has been substituted. Balfe was imprecise when it came to percussion – he generally put 'gran cassa &c', that is, 'bass drum etc', meaning bass drum and cymbal – and exact instrumentation has been left fairly ad hoc, to suit the particular musical moment.

He used various standard abbreviations to indicate repetitions of previous bars, or to show

doubling of a line with another instrument – all devices that enable speedier copying. There were no rehearsal cues.

I prepared the new score using Sibelius, computer software that is a kind of word-processing programme for music. I typed in all the notes into a new score. One great advantage of such programmes is that having created the score, each instrument's part can then be extracted separately and then formatted and printed, and its notes will be the same as shown in the score. As a result – no more checking of parts is required, as would have happened until relatively recently.

Such an undertaking as this is not done in isolation and I am delighted to acknowledge the assistance, in various ways, of Dr Nicolas Bell (British Library), Professor Philip Gossett (University of Chicago), and Basil Walsh (Balfe's biographer).

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BALFE, A CHILD PRODIGY,
PERFORMED ON THE
VIOLIN AT A CONCERT IN
THE ROTUNDA CONCERT
ROOMS, DUBLIN,
ON 30 MAY 1817

MICHAEL WILLIAM BALFE

Music in Balfe's Dublin

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Dublin's taste in music, as the second city of the British Empire, was a reflection of London in many ways. However, the advent of the first performance of G. F. Handel's *Messiah* in 1742 in Dublin and the composer's extensive stay in Ireland contributed much to the city in terms of new musical prestige, along with his complimentary remarks about the musicianship of the Dublin players.

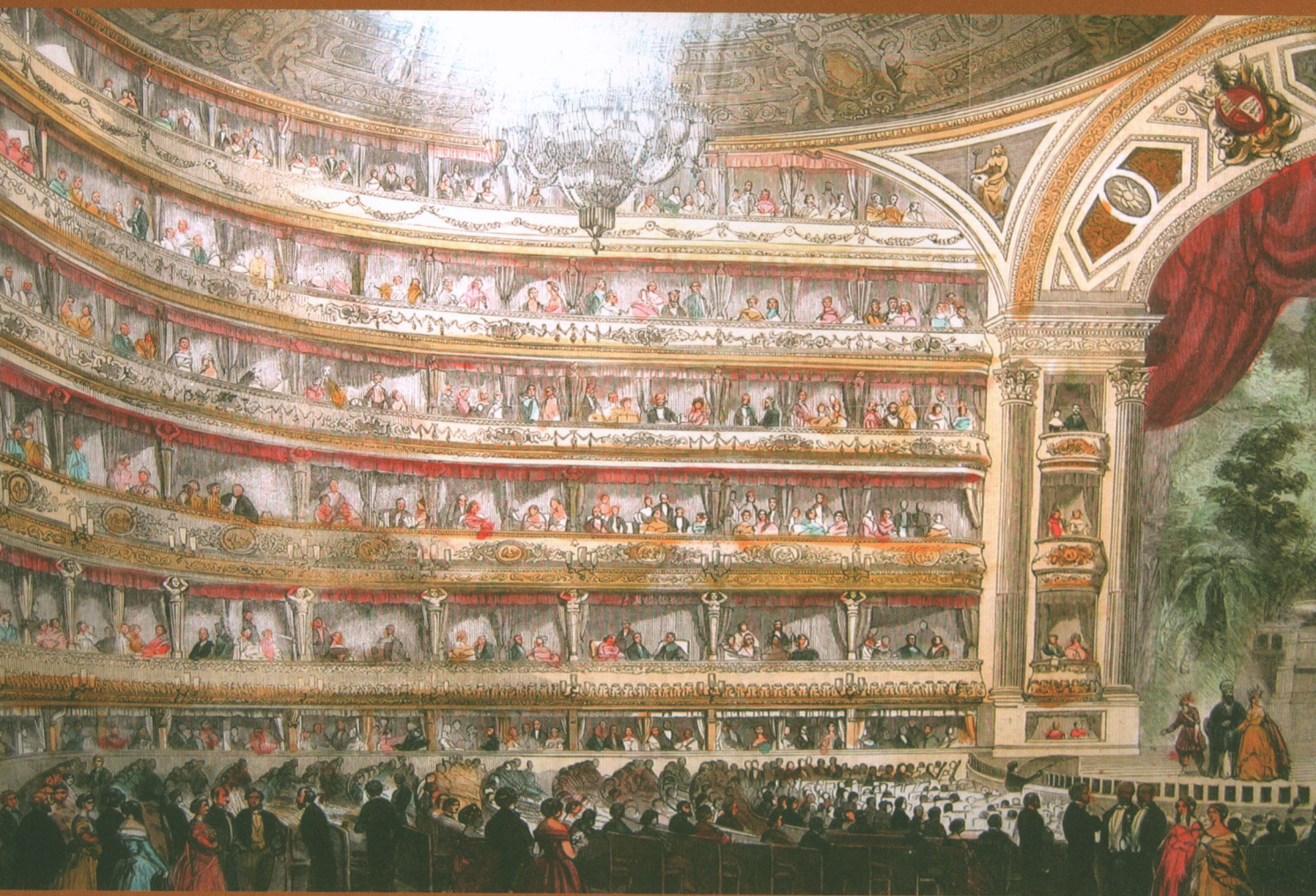
There was great growth in the city during the latter decades of the eighteenth century. The expansion included wider streets and many new buildings, including the Rotunda Concert Rooms. Dublin's population was around 200,000 by the early nineteenth century. It had its theatres and musicians so it wasn't long before visiting operatic troupes and individual performers travelled beyond London to appear there. Later on these visits were extended to include Cork, Limerick, Kilkenny, Belfast and other places. In 1808 the first volume of *Moore's Irish Melodies* appeared. Within a few decades there were numerous choral societies and orchestral groups active in the city.

The two Anglican Cathedrals in the city, St. Patrick's and Christ Church, had a long history of providing musical training. They had large choirs and important musicians on their staff.

Their members worked closely with local orchestras and they had assisted Handel during his visit.

Two of Ireland's early musical pioneers, the composer and performer, and friend of Mozart, Michael Kelly (born Dublin 1762), and the pianist, John Field (born Dublin 1782), were both well along with their international careers having paved the way for future Irish musicians by the start of the nineteenth-century. The arrival of one of Italy's most important and highest paid singers of the period, the soprano Angelica Catalani, to give a concert, was also significant. She later made several return visits, the last of which was in the 1820s. Mozart's *Don Giovanni* was first performed in 1819 by one of the great Italian baritones of the day, Giuseppe Ambrogetti. There were also performances of operas in English.

The important Rotunda Room became the primary venue for major concerts for almost a century and a half (the building still exists today). Legendary artists, such as Nicolo Paganini, Franz Liszt, John Field, Ignaz Moschelles, Ole Bull, and the Irish soprano, Catherine Hayes and many others appeared there during the nineteenth century. Michael Balfe first performed there on the violin as a child prodigy when only nine years old.



ITALIAN OPERA,
LONDON, CIRCA 1840'S

In January 1821, the Theatre Royal in Hawkins Street opened its doors. This was a major theatre built under Royal charter and designed by Samuel Beazley, one of London's best theatre architects. It was reported to have a capacity for 3,000 people. In time, it became the place where most opera (in Italian and English) would be performed in Dublin. It had its own large orchestra of outstanding musicians. Between 1840 and 1880, when the theatre tragically burned down, Italian and English opera seasons were performed there by many of the greatest singers after the London season finished. It was in this exciting musical environment that Balfe the child prodigy first emerged in 1817 at the age of nine, on the start of his musical journey which would take him to many foreign places far away

from Dublin. However, he did return to his native city several times over his long career.

On his first return visit in 1838, after an absence of many years, he referred to himself as a 'Dublin man' much to the delight of the 100 friends who attended a special dinner in his honour at Morrison's Hotel, at the corner of Dawson Street and Nassau Street. During other visits he sometimes appeared as a performer, other times as an internationally renowned composer and a conductor and also as an accompanist for his young daughter, Victoire who was a fine singer.

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basilwalsh@msn.com



MICHAEL
WILLIAM BALFE
WAS BORN IN
1808 AT 10 PITT
STREET WHERE
HIS FAMILY
LIVED UNTIL
1818



MICHAEL WILLIAM BALFE

A Brief Biography

Michael William Balfe was born in Dublin in May 1808. His father was a dancing master and violinist who gave classes in Dublin and Wexford at various times of the year.

Young Balfe studied violin and music theory from an early age, first with his father and then with others. When only a boy he performed as a violin prodigy at the Rotunda Concert Rooms and other venues in Dublin. On the death of his father in 1823, he went to London and joined the orchestra at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.



Il Barbiere di Siviglia. Rossini became Balfe's mentor.

Balfe later returned to Italy with a letter of introduction from Rossini. He spent the next seven years there singing leading baritone roles in operas by Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti. He also composed and produced three operas and met and married Lina Roser, a young soprano of Austrian musical parentage who was an excellent singer. He arrived back in London with his wife and young daughter, Louisa in May 1835. By then he was fluent in French and Italian.

In 1825, he decided go to Italy for vocal training and musical study. During a brief stop-over in Paris he had the opportunity to meet the composer, Luigi Cherubini who was impressed with the young musician. After two years, frustrated musically and short on money, he returned from Milan to Paris. There he contacted Cherubini, who introduced him to Gioachino Rossini. After listening to Balfe sing, Rossini recommended additional vocal study. Balfe also received lessons from Cherubini during this same period. In time, Rossini arranged for the young Irishman to make his debut at the Italian Opera in Paris as Figaro in

Balfe's initial success took place some months later, with the premiere of *The Siege of Rochelle* in October 1835. The opera was an overnight success with its Italian style and memorable melodies. He quickly followed this with *The Maid of Artois* in 1836 which he wrote for his friend the great mezzo-soprano, Maria Malibran. It was a phenomenal success, financially and artistically. His next successful work was *Falstaff*. Over the next thirty-five years Balfe composed 28 operas. When the foreign language versions (German, Italian and French) are counted, his total output was 43 complete operas.

BALFE
IN VIENNA
1846



However his most famous opera, *The Bohemian Girl*, was one of the most successful works of the nineteenth-century and beyond. He created versions of the opera in Italian for Trieste and Bologna, in German for Vienna and Berlin, in French for Rouen and Paris. It gave him great international recognition as a composer.

Balfe's talents stretched far beyond his own operas. He became music director at London's Italian Opera, where he conducted the local premières of several Verdi works. It was a position he held for seven years during which time he conducted over 300 operas by various composers including some of his own.

In addition to his operas, Balfe composed one Sinfonia, at least eight cantatas, a trio for piano, cello and violin, a sonata for piano and cello and over 240 songs.

For most of his life, Balfe suffered from sporadic attacks of a chronic bronchial condition. In October 1870 Balfe died from this ailment at his home outside London after a lengthy illness. His wife Lina Balfe survived him by 18 years.

Shortly after the composer's death, Lina Balfe donated a very large collection of her husband's autographed scores and original manuscripts to

what was then the British Museum. The British Library holds the collection today. In making this donation, it was Lina Balfe's wish that future generations would have access to her husband's music. It is fitting that the performance score developed by Opera Ireland and RTÉ for this historic performance and recording of *Falstaff* is based on Balfe's original manuscript score from the British Library in London.



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basilwalsh@msn.com



HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE,
LONDON WHERE
FALSTAFF PREMIÈRED
IN JULY 1838

FALSTAFF

A Background Overview of the Opera

Shakespeare's works have fascinated musicians over the centuries with their dramas, their finely-crafted characters and the potential for adaptation.

The first opera of note in the nineteenth-century to be based on a Shakespeare play was probably Rossini's *Otello* in 1816, although *Romeo and Juliet* seemed to have particular appeal, as three Italians wrote operas based on the play. However, many years later, it was the dramatic genius of Giuseppe Verdi and his librettist Arrigo Boito in *Otello* (1887) and *Falstaff* (1893) – which was based on *The Merry Wives of Windsor* – that truly created the finest drama.

Long before Verdi, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* had inspired other composers: von Dittersdorf, in 1796, Salieri in 1799 in Vienna and Balfe in 1838 in London. Later, Nicolai premièred his opera in Berlin, quite successfully.

During 1838 Balfe was invited by the director of the Italian Opera in London to compose a new work for Her Majesty's Theatre. The four great vocalists of the Italian Opera, all friends of Balfe's (Lablache, Grisi, Rubini and Tamburini),

MAJESTY'S THEATRE,
Italian Opera House, Hay-market.

Sig. LABLACHE'S
BENEFIT.

This Evening,
THURSDAY, July 19th, 1838.
When will be presented an entirely New Opera, in Two Acts, by BALFE, founded on
Shakespeare's celebrated Play.

"The Merry Wives of Windsor."
With New Scenery, Dresses, and Decorations, to be entitled

FALSTAFF !

The Poetry by Sig. MAGIONI.

Mrs Ford.	Made. GRISI.
Ann Page.	Made. ALBERTAZZI.
Mrs Page.	Made. CAREMOLI.
Mrs Quickley.	Made CASTELLI.
Ford.	Sig. TAMBURINI.
Fenton.	Sig. RUBINI.
Mr Page.	Sig. MORELLI.
George.	Sig. G. GALLI.
Robin.	Sig. SALABERT.
Falstaff.	Sig. LABLACHE.

To conclude with an entirely NEW DIVERTISSEMENT, by Sig. GUERRA, called

L'AMOUR VENGE.

Principal Dancers:

Mesdles. ELSLER
Madlle. BELLON
Madlle. FORSTER
Madlle. GIUBILEI
M. GUERRA.

No Orders admitted, and the Free List suspended (the Press excepted.)

gave their commitment to sing in the Irish composer's new work, thereby assuring Balfe of production (three years earlier, the same singers had been immortalised when they premièred Bellini's, *I Puritani* in Paris).

Balfe immediately set to work and met with Manfredo Maggioni, a London based Italian translator. Maggioni had made translations of Rossini, Auber and Meyerbeer's French operas and had already worked with Balfe on his songs.

Later Maggioni would work also with Verdi.

Given the complexity of the needed adaptation and the time allotted, Maggioni and Balfe agreed on an adaptation of Shakespeare's play, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Maggioni's adaptation condensed the play into two acts, with six scenes in the first act and five scenes in the second act. Another factor in their decision was that the role of the main protagonist in *Falstaff* was ideally suited to the large portly figure of the great bass, Luigi Lablache.

Balfe only had about six weeks to complete the opera which was to be the final work of the season. However, Balfe's skills and ability were ideally suited for the task. Similar to Rossini, he

THE ITALIAN
LIBRETTO FOR
FALSTAFF WAS
WRITTEN BY A
LONDON BASED
TRANSLATOR
OF OPERAS,
S. MANFREDO
MAGGIONI

FALSTAFF,

A COMIC OPERA,

In Two Acts.

BY S. M. MAGGIONI.

THE MUSIC BY M. W. BALFE

AS REPRESENTED

AT HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE

HAYMARKET, JULY 1838.



LONDON:

PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET
PUBLISHED AND SOLD AT HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE
ALSO BY SEGUIN, REGENT STREET; SAMS, ST. JAMES
STREET; HOOKHAM AND MITCHELL, OLD BOND STREET
ANDREWS, NEW BOND STREET; FENTON, STRAND
DAILY AND CO., CORNHILL; AND HILL, REGENT STREET

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

1838.

resorted to some 'borrowing' from one of his earlier Italian works, in order to 'fill-in' selectively.

The première took place on Thursday July 19th, 1838 at Her Majesty's Theatre in London, to a packed house, with Balfe receiving several curtain calls. Since the opera premièred at the end of the season there were only six performances.

Afterwards, The Times music critic gave Balfe great praise as follows:

'... for the share of Mr. Balfe, the composer, which may well be called the lion's share in this production, great praise is to be given. It is decidedly the best thing he has done... no English composer now living could have made himself so completely at home in such an undertaking.'

The composer seemed to enjoy the work and he himself frequently sang arias from *Falstaff* when participating in concerts.

In 1848, when Balfe was music director at the Italian Opera, a revival was announced with the soprano, Jenny Lind and the tenor, Italo Gardoni. Lablache was scheduled for the title role again. At the last moment it was cancelled, apparently because the prima donna was not comfortable with her role. No further revivals were ever scheduled.

It is interesting to speculate if there might possibly have been a link, however remote, between Verdi's *Falstaff* and Balfe's work. In some respects it would almost seem logical, given the association of those directly involved.



Jenny Lind

It is highly likely that Verdi's librettist, Arrigo Boito, who was an intellectual and an accomplished composer in his own right, was familiar with Balfe's *Falstaff*. The music was published by Lucca (Milan) in 1838 and therefore it would have automatically been housed in the Milan Conservatorio library – a requirement of the time. Boito was also a music student at the same Conservatorio for several years. Additionally, both Balfe and Maggioni knew Verdi well, having worked with him on different occasions, so there is the possibility that Verdi's later masterpiece might have been influenced by Balfe's earlier version. Sadly, by the time Verdi's *Falstaff* was first staged in Milan in 1893, Balfe had long since passed on and his version was consigned to history.

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THE ROLE OF
THE MAIN
PROTAGONIST
IN FALSTAFF
WAS IDEALLY
SUITED TO
THE LARGE
PORTLY
FIGURE OF
THE GREAT
BASS, LUIGI
LABLACHE



FALSTAFF - A SYNOPSIS

*(Libretto by S. Manfredo Maggioni based on Shakespeare's
'The Merry Wives of Windsor')*

ACT I

Scene I

A room at the Garter Inn, Windsor

As Ford and Page enter they are discussing Falstaff and his habit of borrowing money and not repaying it. Page, a creditor is furious, threatening legal action, while Ford tries to calm him.

Falstaff now enters, brooding on the fact that no one will lend him money, and saying life like this is worse than death. Page criticises Falstaff, who responds with derogatory remarks. Ford tries to stop them. He departs to get help. Shortly he returns with others who try to end the dispute. Ford suggests some wine as the solution. They all agree.

Falstaff next gives his servant George letters to deliver to Mrs. Ford, Mrs. Page and Miss Anne.

Scene II

Outside Ford's house in Windsor

On reading the amorous phrases and seeing that it is signed by 'John Falstaff' Mrs. Ford cries out about his wickedness. Mrs. Page arrives to speak to Mrs. Ford about a letter she has just received. Mrs. Ford breaks out laughing after looking at it, saying she has received a similar note. Anne next arrives with an exact copy. All three are greatly amused. They decide to have their revenge on

Falstaff for his conceit.

Scene III

Fenton and Ford in conversation

Ford and Fenton have become aware of Falstaff's letters. Ford decides to find out how serious Sir John is about his pursuits. He is cautioned by Fenton as he discusses a plan to disguise himself and approach Falstaff to learn more about the fat knight's intentions.

Scene IV

Falstaff's quarters in the Garter Inn

Mrs. Quickly meets with Falstaff saying that she has a secret message from Mrs. Ford who wants Falstaff to be at her house the next morning. Falstaff is elated. Mrs. Quickly also mentions that Mrs. Page received his letter but that there was no possibility of a meeting. Falstaff anxiously asks if the two ladies know each other. Mrs. Quickly responds yes, but they don't talk.

Ford arrives at Falstaff's apartment in disguise and introduces himself as Mr. Brook, saying that he's looking for help with a certain Mrs. Ford. Ford (Mr. Brook) asks Falstaff to assist him in spending all the money he needs so that he can conquer this lovely lady. Falstaff immediately accepts the challenge, mentioning that he already has an appointment with her. He brags about the fact that her husband is not proficient in the art of

NON CREDETE POI CHIO SIA,

Duetto

Sung by

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In the Opera of

FALSTAFF,

The Poetry by

S. M. MAGGIONI,

Composed by

M. W. BALFE.

Ent. Sta. Hall.

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PARIS. Pacini.

MILAN, Lucca.

VOCE.

PIANO

FORTE.

p sosten:

FORD.

Non cre_dete poi chio si_a

Fred_do freddo come un

love. Ford (Mr. Brook) is furious and can barely hold himself back, eventually settling on the fact that Falstaff had already taken his bait.

Scene V

A room in Ford's House

Mrs. Ford, Anne and several servants are gathered around a large laundry basket. Mrs. Ford tells them to dump the contents into the Thames when given instructions. Mrs. Quickly announces Falstaff's arrival. Falstaff saunters in smiling and complimenting Mrs. Ford. Mrs. Quickly enters saying Anne has just arrived. Mrs. Ford tells Falstaff to hide in the closet. Anne enters announcing that Mr. Ford is now on his way home. They all decide that Falstaff must hide in the laundry basket and they will cover him with linens.

Scene VI

Ford and Fenton arrive at his house

Ford enters along with Fenton and others. He's driven by jealousy as he questions his wife about Falstaff. She feigns innocence when asked what's in the basket, saying it is only dirty laundry. Fenton, seeing Anne looking guilty, questions her since he's in love with her. Ford starts a wild search of the house and not finding Falstaff bemoans his fate. Meanwhile, the servants have dumped the basket contents in the river, as planned.

ACT II

Scene I

A street in Windsor

Rumour abounds that the rascal Falstaff is dead. They all mourn him, until someone suddenly

sees him approaching but covered in mud. Falstaff tells them his tale. The townsfolk knowing the real truth hope that he has learned a lesson.

Scene II

Fenton and Page

Fenton speaks to Page about his love for Anne and his concern that recently she seemed distracted. Later Fenton dreams about the time when he and Anne first met and experienced love at first sight.

Scene III

A room in Mrs. Ford's house

Falstaff arrives at Mrs. Ford's. He asks Mrs. Quickly about Ford, and she tells him he won't be back until nightfall. Mrs. Ford enters and greets Falstaff. He's delighted when Mrs. Ford outlines a new plan to meet at midnight in the forest at Herne's Oak where Falstaff is to arrive disguised with two huge antlers on his head. Falstaff is excited that his escapade continues. Mrs. Quickly rushes in to say that Ford is returning unexpectedly. They quickly dress Falstaff up like a fat old objectionable townswoman and hustle him out.

Scene IV

A street in Windsor

Mrs. Quickly meets with Anne telling her that Falstaff will be in Windsor forest at twelve midnight and that she must get all her friends to be there dressed as witches and fairies. Ford is also to be informed. Anne agrees, saying that she will also invite Fenton. When Fenton arrives he and Anne talk about love and agree to meet later that evening.

Scene V - Windsor Forest at midnight

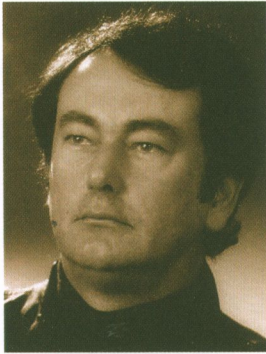
Falstaff arrives disguised with a large pair of antler horns. He counts down the time: one, two, three... 'til midnight. He trembles, saying that he feels like a fat Windsor stag.

Ford and his wife appear. Falstaff whispers for 'his doe.' He embraces what he believes to be Mrs. Ford, only to realise it's a man. Falstaff confused, next sees lights in the forest along with witches and fairies appearing from nowhere, chanting about a mortal hiding in the forest. He panics as they approach his hiding place.

They all dance around Falstaff, throwing off their disguises in merriment. Mrs. Ford and others admonish him. Falstaff repents. Ford forgives his wife. Anne agrees to marry Fenton while Falstaff concludes his adventure saying... it was a lesson that he shall always remember.

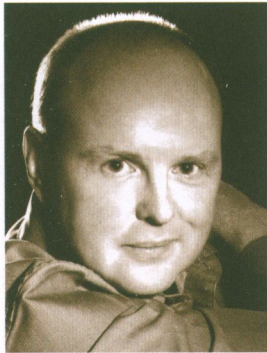
Falstaff Synopsis © - BASIL WALSH

BIOGRAPHIES



MARCEL VANAUD (Baritone) *Falstaff*

For Opera Ireland, Marcel has sung Amanasro, Rigoletto, Gérard, Scarpia and Don Pasquale and directed masterclasses in Limerick. After studying in Brussels Conservatoire and in Liège, he spent seven years with Opéra de Wallonie before beginning his international career at La Monnaie in Brussels in the three Mozart/DaPonte operas. A regular guest at opera houses all over Europe and in North and South America, his repertoire includes Verdi's Nabucco, Ezio (*Attila*), Francesco (*Masnadieri*), Stanker (*Stiffelio*), Miller, Luna, Germont, Boccanegra, Renato, Carlo (*Forza del Destino*), Rodrigue, Iago and Ford as well as other Italian baritone parts, the main French bariton Martin roles, and Wagner's Dutchman. In 1998 he made his La Scala debut in the premiere of Giacomo Manzoni's *Dr. Faustus*, and he has also appeared in Hindemith's *Cardillac*, Gottfried von Einem's *Danton's Tod* and Igor Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*. In 1998 he sang Vitellius in EMI's recording of Massenet's *Hérodiade* under Michel Plasson; and he has also recorded a CD recital of Verdi baritone arias.



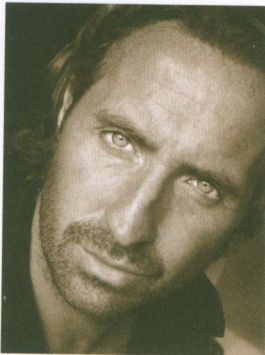
BARRY BANKS (Tenor) *Fenton*

A graduate of The Royal Northern College of Music, Barry Banks has established himself as one of today's finest interpreters of the Italian bel canto repertoire. He is much in demand on the international opera platform, performing at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, The Metropolitan Opera, Opéra National de Paris, English National Opera, Théâtre du Châtelet, the Salzburg Festival, La Monnaie, The Santa Fe Opera and Teatro Comunale di Bologna amongst others. His roles include: Lindoro (*L'Italiana in Algeri*); Nemorino (*L'Elisir d'Amore*); Don Ramiro (*La Cenerentola*); Oreste (*Ermione*); Tom Rakewell; Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*); Don Narciso (*Il Turco in Italia*); Belfiore & Libenskof (*Il Viaggio a Reims*); L'Astrologue (*Le Coq d'Or*); Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*) and Uberto (*La Donna del Lago*). A committed concert artist Barry Banks has sung Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* with The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Daniele Gatti, *Fidelio* with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under Walter Weller, *Bruckner's Requiem* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra under Sir Charles Mackerras, and Rossini's *Armida* at the Edinburgh Festival under Carlo Rizzi. Other highlights have included *War Requiem* with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg under Jan Latham-Koenig, *Ermione* in concert at Carnegie Hall and *I Puritani* and *Linda di Chamounix* at Caramoor Festival. Barry Banks' discography includes *The Elixir of Love*, *Don Pasquale*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Thieving Magpie* and *The Magic Flute* for the Chandos Opera in English series, *La Bohème* under Kent Nagano and *Un Ballo in Maschera* under Carlo Rizzi both for Teldec and *Trial by Jury* under Sir Charles Mackerras for Telarc. DVD releases include *Billy Budd* in the English National Opera production for Virgin, and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* which was recorded at Buckingham Palace. His solo recital disc – *Barry Banks sings Bel Canto Arias* – is released by Chandos.



MAJELLA CULLAGH (Soprano) Mrs. Ford

Irish soprano Majella Cullagh trained with Maeve Coughlan at the Cork School of Music, and at the National Opera Studio in London. She now studies with Gerald Martin Moore. Her international career brought her to: Copenhagen (*Elisir d'Amore*), Wexford (Wagner's *Das Liebesverbot*), Las Palmas (*Così Fan Tutte*), New Zealand (Massenet's *Manon*), Regensburg (*Don Giovanni*), Dallas (*Maria Stuarda*), Stockholm and Antwerp (*Maria Stuarda*), Edinburgh (*Adelaide di Borgogna*), London (*Pia de' Tolomei* and *Diluvio Universale*, *La Bohème* directed by Francesca Zambello), Glyndebourne (*Comte Ory*, *Traviata*, *Fledermaus*), Amsterdam (*Death of Klinghoffer*, Rossini's *Morte di Didone* and *Stabat Mater*, Donizetti's *Poliuto*), Toulon (*Barbiere di Siviglia*), Cardiff (*Yeoman of the Guard*), New York, Lisbon and Oporto (*Handel's Amadigi*), Venice (*Scènes de Faust* conducted by Jeffrey Tate). Her discography includes: *Maritana* and Mendelssohn's *Second Symphony* (Naxos); *Zaira*, *Zoraida di Granata*, *Pia de' Tolomei*, *Diluvio Universale*, Rossini's *Bianca e Falliero* and *Elisabetta*, *Regina d'Inghilterra* with Jennifer Larmore (also performed in London for the Queen's Golden Jubilee), as well as four volumes in the *Il Salotto* series (Opera Rara). Among her future engagements: Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* (Amsterdam Concertgebouw), Donizetti's *Maria di Rohan* (Bergamo), Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* (Queen Elizabeth Hall), and her debut in *Roberto Devereux* (Opera Holland Park).



SAM McELROY (Baritone) Ford

Born in Cork, Ireland, in 1970, Sam McElroy gained an Honours Degree at the University of London in French (with Italian, German and Russian). He studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama under David Pollard and at the Bastille's Centre de Formation in Paris, for which he was awarded a scholarship by the Ian Flemming Charitable trust in 1996. In 1999, Sam McElroy represented the Republic of Ireland at the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World. Sam made his debut at Opera Ireland as Figaro *Barbiere di Seviglia*, and has since returned as Sharpless *Madama Butterfly*, Yeletsy *Queen of Spades* and the title role in *Don Giovanni*. He appeared as hero Harry Heegan in the Irish premiere of Mark Anthony Turnage's *The Silver Tassie* which won the Irish Times/ESB Award for Opera. He appeared as Dandini *La Cenerentola*, and as Stan Kowalski in Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire*. His European debut came as Lescaut *Manon* at Opera Monte-Carlo under Mark Minkowski in a co-production with the Teatro alla Scala. At the Bastille, Opera National de Paris, he has appeared as Kuligin *Kat'a Kabanova*, Vierte Knappe *Parsifal* and Le Mari in Offenbach's *Le Mari a La Porte*. At the Gothenburg Opera Tomsy *Queen of Spades*, at the Teatro Cagliari in Sardinia Primo Barcolo *A Village Romeo and Juliet* by Delius, at the Danish National Opera, Marcello *La Bohème*, Silvio I Pagliacci and Prince Otokar *Der Freischutz*, and at the Stadttheater Wiesbaden Dandini *La Cenerentola*. Sam is an acclaimed recitalist and recently earned critical acclaim in Denmark for his performances of Schubert's *Winterreise* in Copenhagen.



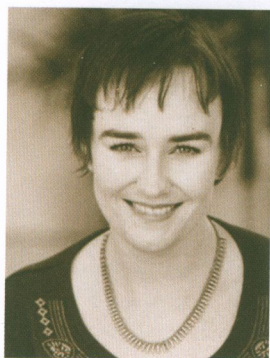
VICTORIA MASSEY (Mezzo-Soprano) Mrs. Page

Victoria Massey was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1971. From 1988 to 1992, she studied music at the D.I.T Conservatory of Music and Drama in Dublin with vocal coach Deirdre Grier-Delaney. She was awarded her Diploma in voice and vocal teaching in 1992. Between 1992 and 1995, she worked in the field of chamber music and oratorio, performing in major venues in Ireland. In 1994, she was vocal finalist of the Lombard and Ulster Bursary Award. Victoria furthered her vocal studies with Prof. Lilian Sukis at the Hochschule Mozarteum in Salzburg. After returning to Ireland she began touring with Opera Theatre Company and performing in operas by Mozart, Britten and Janacek. She also played the role of Marcellina at the Chiemgauer International Opera Festival in Bavaria in 2001. Victoria has appeared as a guest soloist at the National Concert Hall in Dublin singing a selection of arias by Strauss, Bizet and Rossini with the National Symphony Orchestra. She has participated in Masterclasses with the American Baritone, Thomas Hampson in Salzburg and Vienna, with Birgit Remmert at Gut Immling and with Lorraine Nuber in New York. In 2004, Victoria won 1st prize at the C.A Seghizzi International singing competition in Gorizia, Italy. Victoria has performed more recently as the 3rd Lady in *The Magic Flute* by Mozart at both Teatro La Fenice in Venice and at Macerata Opera Festival, Italy where she also performed the role of Adelma in *Turandot*.



NYLE WOLFE (Baritone) Mr. Page

Nyle Wolfe sang his first concert at the tender age of six performing "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer" in his local Catholic Church. A simple Sing and Get Paid for It! ad in the Irish Examiner led to his professional debut in Cork's Opera House. He graduated at London's Royal Academy of Music with their highest academic award and won a scholarship to complete his training at Zurich's prestigious International Opera Studio. After thousands of performances in distinguished venues throughout Europe and North America, he has honed a reputation as one of the most talented vocalists of his generation. He has sung for international monarchs and presidents including Queen Elizabeth II, Bill Clinton and Taoiseach Brian Cowen. His distinguished debut album, *Moodswings* released in 2007 and distributed online enhanced his enviable resume of live performances and has led to future engagements as far away as New Zealand and Antarctica.



EDEL O'BRIEN (Mezzo-Soprano) *Mrs. Quickly*

Edel O'Brien comes from Kilrush, Co. Clare. She has an Honours Masters Degree in Music and Performance from the N.U.I., Maynooth. At the age of nineteen, she won the Margaret Burke-Sheridan Cup at the Dublin Feis Ceoil. In London, Edel was awarded a Scholarship to study singing at Trinity College of Music, where she gained 'Distinction' in her Postgraduate Diploma in Vocal Studies. In addition, she won the Vocal Faculty Prize and the College Gold Medal. In 2002, Edel was one of seven singers out of 200 applicants worldwide to be accepted on the Young Artists' Programme at the Centre de Formation Lyrique, Opera Bastille, Opera National de Paris. There she spent two years working and studying. While there, she won the Prix Lyrique which is awarded annually to one male and one female singer at the C.F.L. She has much experience in opera, oratorio and recital. She has sung with various opera companies and choral societies around Ireland, Britain and France including the Opera Bastille, the Anna Livia International Opera Festival, L'Opera de Rouen, the Malcolm Sargent Festival Choir, Dartington, Festival Choir, the Dublin County Choir and the Culwick Choral Society.



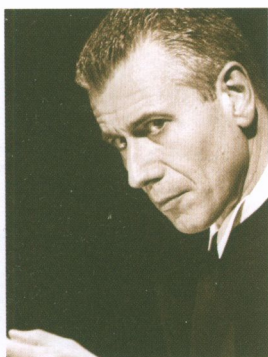
TARA ERRAUGHT (Mezzo-Soprano) *Annetta*

Tara who has just begun a two year contract as artist in residence at the Bavarian State Opera, Munich, studied with Dr. Veronica Dunne at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Dublin. The role of Annetta in Balfe's *Falstaff*, will be Tara's debut with Opera Ireland. 2008 has so far been an exceptionally busy year for Tara. Beginning with her American debut with a solo recital in the Metropolitan Club, New York, a Christmas concert tour with the RTE National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, she sang Gianetta alongside Mari Moriya in *L'elisir d'Amore* with the RTE Concert Orchestra. Tara sang Rosina in Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* as part of the Montalto Musica festival, Lurisia, Italy. She was awarded 1st prize in the Jackub Pustine International singing competition in the Czech Republic along with the Zdar nad Sazavou audience prize in May. In June Tara was awarded the Washington National Opera prize and the Houston Grand Opera prize at the Hans Gabor, Belvedere International singing competition in Vienna. Last year Tara was awarded 2nd place in the Veronica Dunne International singing competition, where she also received the Dermott Troy prize for the best Irish singer.



BRENDAN COLLINS (Baritone) *Giorgio*

A native of Cork, Brendan began his studies at the Cork School of Music and at the DIT Conservatory. In 2007 Brendan was granted a scholarship to study at the opera studio of the Theatre de la Monnaie in Brussels under renowned bass-baritone Jose van Dam. In 2005 he was one of only 12 Irish singers to be chosen for the first Wexford Festival Artists Development programme under the direction of Welsh tenor Dennis O'Neill. He has performed across Ireland, Europe and America with Opera Ireland, Lyric Opera, Opera Theatre Company, Opera2005, Opera Cork, Anna Livia Opera Festival, Opera South and Co-Opera. His roles include Schaunard (*La Boheme*), Count Almaviva (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Fiorello (*The Barber of Seville*), Count Ceprano (*Rigoletto*), Amantio di Nicalao (*Gianni Schicchi*), Baron Duphol & Dr Grenvil (*La Traviata*), Dancaire (*Carmen*), Yamadori (*Madama Butterfly*) amongst others. Highlights on the concert platform include *Handel Messiah* (Pro Cathedral Dublin), *Mozart Requiem* (National Concert Hall Dublin), *Mozart Vespers* (Kajetanekirche, Salzburg), *Mozart Coronation Mass* (St. Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna), *Haydn Nelson Mass* (St Finbarr's, Cork), *Orff Carmina Burana* (National Concert Hall Dublin), and *Beethoven 9th Symphony* (Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels) amongst others. Future engagements include Masetto (*Don Giovanni*) with the Orchestra of St Cecilia and Marcello (*La Boheme*) with the Glashule Opera Festival



MARCO ZAMBELLI (Conductor)

Born in Genoa, he completed there his musical studies (organ, harpsichord and chamber music), receiving in 1986 the Premier Prix de Virtuosité at the 'Conservatoire Supérieur' in Geneva. From 1988 to 1992 he was appointed Chorus Master at the Lyon Opera, where he remained also Head of Music until 1994, being able to work with such conductors as Arena, Krivine, Campanella, Marriner and Gardiner, who requested him to work on several recordings for Virgin and DG. As a conductor, he made his debut in Messina in 1994, starting an international career which led him to: Hong Kong (*Cenerentola*), Naples (*Luisa Miller*, *Tancredi*), Nice (*Don Giovanni*, *Lucia*), Las Palmas (*Maria Stuarda*, *Turco in Italia*, *Lucia*), Tel Aviv (*Pagliacci*), Parma (*Così Fan Tutte*), Seoul (*Traviata*, *Aida*, *Turandot*), Montecarlo (*Tancredi*, *Pietra Del Paragone*), Toulon (*Italiana*, *Turandot*), Prague (*Manon Lescaut*), Venice (*Traviata*), Cincinnati (*Norma*), Liege (*Andrea Chenier*).

Marco Zambelli also regularly appears in the most prestigious venues around the world with tenor Rolando Villazon: Champs Élysées in Paris, Gewandhaus in Leipzig, Philharmonie in Munich and Berlin, Alte Oper in Frankfurt, Smetana Hall in Prague, Copenhagen, Köln. Among his future engagements: *Favorita* in Bergamo, *Tosca* in Las Palmas, *Puritani* in Athens, *Caterina Cornaro* in Amsterdam.

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